

HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

By the Abbé J. E. DARRAS.

(Translated from the French for the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.)

§ VII. GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

33.—DIFFERENCE OF THE TWO GENEALOGIES OF ST. MATTHEW AND ST. LUKE.

THE structure of the Gospel does not need so many foreign supports in order to conciliate our faith. It suffices to us that it has a being; its existence alone proves its veracity; and according as each new century rolls over its venerable stratum, leaving undisturbed its every stone, the sum of evidence, in proof of its authority, goes on increasing even with the progress of ages. We know that the two Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke give, each, the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Matthew traces his from Abraham to Joseph, the spouse of Mary, through the family of David, following the royal line of Juda, from Solomon to Jesus Christ. The genealogy shown by St. Luke, follows an inverse order; it commences from Jesus Christ, and traces back the course of ages, through David, Abraham, Noe, and the antediluvian patriarchs up to Adam, "who was of God." Now, these two genealogies, running in parallel line up to David, and beginning from that king, have but two points of contact: Zorobabel and Salathiel. All the other intervening degrees are different. The genealogy of St. Matthew traces the descent of Jesus Christ, from David, by Solomon; the genealogy of St. Luke traces the descent of Jesus Christ from David by Nathan. "The inexactitude and the contradictions of these two genealogies, says rationalism, lead to the belief that they were the result of popular ideas operating at various points, and that none of them were sanctioned by Jesus." (1) Never was such nonsense written. If the two genealogies were the result of "popular ideas," executed at a distance from each other, care would have been taken, above all, to make them agree—to do away with the apparent contradiction which rationalism discovers in them—the explanation of which, all the fathers, Greek and Latin, from Irenæus and St. Justin, have given us. None but a Jew—and a Jew, contemporary with Jesus Christ, could have traced these two genealogies. The united science of the academies of the world could not invent them in our day. And for this reason—

34.—IMPORTANCE OF GENEALOGIES AMONG THE HEBREWS.

Among the Hebrews, genealogies were sacred. The original records of these—confided to the Scribes, placed under the charge of the priests, were deposited in the archives of the temple, and the study of them constituted an essential part of education. The people were divided into tribes, and each had its own territory; and time was measured for the purpose of genealogies, by the number seven and its squares. There was in this essentially Jewish practice—an example of which occurs in St. Matthew's genealogy—not only a mechanical practice for helping the memory, but an application to the series of human races, of the grand septenary law, which we have seen applied to days, weeks, years, men, animals, fields and inheritances throughout the entire Hebrew history. How insert such usages as these as an after thought! At each period of seven weeks of years, that is to say, at every half century, when the trumpet of Jubilee sounded the deliverance of captives, the restitution of sold estates, the extinction of debts, and the restoration of each family, of each individual, to the primitive order; it was the genealogical lists, preserved in the archives of the temple, and in the domestic sanctuary, which presided at this great revolution. Alliances even, exacted on the part of the family and of the state, the scrupulous observance of the law of genealogies, the religious hierarchy, the civil constitution, the national existence of the Jewish people, rested solely on the tables of genealogies. It would not be possible then, among the Hebrews, to fabricate for oneself a genealogical tree, at will. The archives of the temple would have immediately confounded the imposture. Josephus, too, in his "Autobiography," (2) takes a certain vanity in exposing to the eyes of the patricians of Rome—themselves proud of their origin—the antiquity of his own race; and he adds that the official and public lists, proved to a certainty each degree of his genealogy. "This order is observed, says he, not only in Judea, but in all the places where my compatriots are dispersed; in Egypt, at Babylon, everywhere. They send to Jerusalem the name of the father of her whom they wish to espouse, with a memoir of their genealogy, certified by witnesses. Should a war break out, the priests prepare, on the ancient tables, even registers of all the women that remain of sacerdotal origin; and they will not espouse one who has been a captive, lest she may have had commerce with strangers. Can anything be more calculated to hinder all mixture of races? Our priests can, by authentic documents, prove their descent, from father to son, for two thousand years. Should any one fail in the observance of these laws, he is separated for ever from the altar." (3) With such an assemblage of formalities surrounding the Hebrew genealogies, a supposititious genealogy for Jesus Christ was impossible, so long as the temple of Jerusalem remained standing. But after the ruin of the Holy City by Titus, this was not only a moral but a physical impossibility. Fire had consumed all the archives of the temple, and, from that time, the dispersed Jews remained without a genealogy, confounded indiscriminately under the name of sons of Jacob, ignorant themselves to what tribes their ancestors formerly belonged.

(1) Vie de Jesus, pag. 239, 240.

(2) Joseph., Autobiogr., cap. i.

(3) Joseph., Respons. ad Apion., cap. ii.

The Lazarists in Persia.—While the Lazarist Fathers are being expelled from Germany—their house at Reuss has just been shut up—they are being thanked and complimented by the Shah, with whom some of the Fathers have had an interview in Paris. The congregation possess several establishments in Persia, at Tabriz, Ourmiah, and other towns, and several thousand children are educated in the schools attached to them. The Shah is said to have expressed his satisfaction at their labours and his admiration of their devotedness; and to have promised them his continued protection.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

CHRISTMAS.

"Prepare His way!" This was the Baptist's theme To listening crowds, By sacred Jordan's stream.	Give him thy soul, Washed clean from every stain.
"Prepare His way!" Cast off the slough of sin! Repent the past; A better life begin.	"Prepare His way!" Rest not your hopes on earth; All it can give Is but of little worth.
"Prepare His way!" Make straight the crooked path, Cleanse the foul heart— Near is the day of wrath.	"Prepare His way!" Joyful His presence greet. Lift up your hearts! These are an offering meet.
"Prepare His way!" Pass through the saving flood; Arise new-born Adopted sons of God.	"Prepare His way!" Heed not the worldling's scorn; Think but of Christ On happy Christmas morn.
"Prepare His way!" The Saviour comes on earth. Angelic choirs Loud herald the glad birth.	"Prepare His way!" At His own altar kneel. To the wrapt soul He will Himself reveal.
"Prepare His way!" Not as a conqueror comes— He bringeth peace To all His children's homes.	"Prepare His way!" Banquet on heavenly food: Sweet Sacrament! His very flesh and blood.
"Prepare His way!" Born of a Virgin pure— God in the flesh— Man's sorrows to endure.	"Prepare His way!" Drink in the founts of grace. Find in the Faith A sure abiding place.
"Prepare His way!" The powers of evil fly. Be strong in faith! Jesus our strength is nigh.	"Prepare His way!" Triumphant psalms raise; Let censers wave— The lights symbolic blaze!
"Prepare His way!" Cast out all things profane;	"Prepare His way!" Rejoice! His Church on earth. High Festival— The day that gave Him birth.

C. E. H.

WHO COULD DESCRIBE IT.

SPEAKING of the English pilgrimage, the London correspondent of the New York 'Times' says:—"Occurring, as it will, at the dullest moment of the dull season, the proposed pilgrimage of British Catholics to some holy shrine near Paris, of which I at this moment forget the name, cannot fail to enlist a considerable amount of attention. I already hear it asked whether correspondents will be allowed to accompany the religious excursion: but it seems impossible that any direct encouragement will be given the scoffers. If Mrs Brown will join the pilgrims, I think she might write an account of the journey as amusing as anything else that proceeds from that lady's prolific pen. But Mr Arthur Sketchley, to whom the said Mrs Brown owes her existence, is a devout Roman Catholic, and, in connection with religious matters, will hold no one up to scorn except the infidel. Who could produce a more thoroughly humorous description of a modern religious pilgrimage by express from London to Paris, with fifteen minutes for lunch at Boulange, and half an hour for dinner at Amiens, than Mr Burnand, the author of "Happy Thoughts," and a constant contributor to 'Punch'? But Mr Burnand is as devout a Roman Catholic as Mr Arthur Sketchley—a pseudonym, by the way, which conceals the name of a former clergyman of the Church of England. Mr Clement Scott, an excellent descriptive writer, and accustomed to notice theatrical representations, might be thought of as the historian of an event too remarkable to be allowed to pass without record or comment; but Mr Scott is also a Roman Catholic. Mr Gilbert & Beckett, one of the authors of the "Happy Land," and editor at various times of various satirical papers, has plenty of variety, and might be expected to see the grotesque points which must be presented by so anachronistic a performance as a pilgrimage from London to no matter what shrine in the latter half of the nineteenth century; but Mr & Beckett is also a Roman Catholic."

THE ABSCONDER O'FARREL.

A LATE Melbourne Police Gazette is enlivened by the following neat little thing in the descriptive line of business:—"Hugh J. Vincent O'Farrel is charged on a warrant with embezzling upwards of £2000, the money of the Victorian Government, since October, 1870. O'Farrel is a native of Dublin, and speaks with the accent of that city; thirty five to forty years of age, 6ft 1in or 2in high; dark complexion, hair, whiskers, beard, and moustache; wears his hair long and thick behind; small features, stooping shoulders, slovenly gait, unbecoming manner, slight mixture of Hindoo blood in his veins; dresses carelessly in tweed suit and low crowned dark hat; fond of dogs and sports. He was employed as a clerk in the Crown Lands Department. The person thus graphically sketched is supposed to be at present in New Zealand, where the police are on the look-out for him; and whither detectives have come from Melbourne to search for him.

Toleration in Russia.—The 'Gazetta Narodnaya' (local official organ) states that at Minsk, 28 Catholic priests have been imprisoned and sent to Grodno, for refusing to use the Russian language in their churches.